Modeling between primary maladaptive schemas and suicidal personality traits: mediation of the meaning of life in Gachsaran high school students

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ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: In the present study, the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and personality traits with suicidal tendency was investigated through the mediation of the meaning of life. **Method:** The current research was descriptive and correlational (structural equation modeling). 420 secondary school students of Gachsaran city (215 girls and 205 boys) were selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method. In order to measure the studied variables, Yang et al.'s (1998) maladaptive schema questionnaires, Neo's personality traits (McCree and Costa, 1985), Steger et al.'s meaning of life (2006) and Mehrabi's suicide tendency (2009) were used. In this research, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used with AMOS version 26 software. Mediation relationships in the proposed model were tested using the bootstrap method. **Results:** The findings showed that the proposed model has a good fit with the data. Early maladaptive schemas had a negative and significant effect on the meaning of life (β=-0.11; P=0.017), but their effect on suicide tendency was not significant. Also, the findings showed that the personality traits of neuroticism (β=0.23, P<0.001), extroversion (β=0.19, P<0.002), agreeableness (β=0.17, P<0.003), and conscientiousness (β=0.48, P<0.001), had a significant predictive power of the meaning of life among students. **Conclusion:** The results related to indirect relationships also showed that primary maladaptive schemas and characteristics of neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness through the meaning of life had significant indirect effects on suicidal tendencies, but the indirect path of trait empiricism to suicidal tendency through the meaning of life was not significant.

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Introduction

Suicide among young people and teenagers is one of the two main causes of death, and in the last decade, the death of teenagers due to this reason has steadily increased, so that since 2014, suicide has become the third cause of death among people aged 15 to 24. It has been promoted to the second cause of death (Hosseini et al., 2019). Suicide has now become a crisis and is part of one of the main social harms in our society, and because there are very few studies, the interactive and automatic effects of all the factors in the interpersonal psychology model of suicide concerning each other and in relation to the factors have examined the existing risk (Barizli et al., 2015),

It can be considered one of the possible factors in the occurrence of suicidal behaviors, the cognitive foundations and primary schemas of the individual (Salehi & Narimani, 2018). Schemas are systematic elements of past reactions and experiences that form a relatively coherent and stable body of knowledge and can guide subsequent perceptions and evaluations (Segal, 2017). Schemas can be positive or negative. They are rooted in past experiences and are formed due to not satisfying basic needs, especially emotional ones (Mohammedpour et al., 2020). In fact, early maladaptive schemas are valid representations of unpleasant childhood experiences and are defined as broad, dysfunctional, and comprehensive patterns that include memories, emotions, thoughts, and physical feelings about oneself and relationships with others.

Another risk factor related to suicide is a person's personality. People's personality traits are important and influential factors in their growth and development, influenced by family, community, peers, etc., affecting their academic performance. The evidence indicates that the role of personality traits in the scope of educational success and academic progress goes beyond intelligence (Moghimiyan & Karimi, 2012). In fact, personality traits are a relatively stable set of internal factors that direct all individual activities (Shamlo, 2006) and include five dimensions of neuroticism, extroversion, empiricism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. being (McGowan et al., 2014).

A protective factor against suicidal ideation and attempted suicide is the meaning of life and the search for meaning in life (Costanza et al., 2019). Many studies have reported the meaning of life as a protective factor against suicide. In fact, the meaning of life is one of the most serious issues the human mind has focused on (Rezaei & Safian, 2012). Having a sense of purpose and self-worth leads to realizing meaning in life. It is possible that self-disciplined people feel efficient and take control of life's events due to having a goal and can understand the failures, tragedies, conflicts of life and even the most difficult moments of life as meaningful and to control them in order to achieve the goals of life and thus achieve the meaning and purpose of their life.

Based on these findings, the researcher intends to answer whether the meaning of life mediates the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and personality traits with suicidal tendencies.

In this model, early maladaptive schemas and personality traits are considered as antecedents of the meaning of life, then the meaning of life affects the tendency to commit suicide.

Method

The current research was descriptive and correlational (structural equation modeling). 420 secondary school students of Gachsaran city (215 girls and 205 boys) were selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method. In order to measure the studied variables, Young et al.'s (1998) maladaptive schema questionnaires, Neo's personality traits (McCree and Costa, 1985), Steger et al.'s meaning of life (2006) and Mehrabi's suicide tendency (2009) were used. In this research, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used with AMOS version 26 software. Mediation relationships in the proposed model were tested using the bootstrap method.

Tools

1. Young et al.'s maladaptive schemas questionnaire (1998). In order to measure maladaptive schemas, the questionnaire on maladaptive schemas by Young et al. (1998) was used. This tool contains 75 questions designed to evaluate 15 early maladaptive schemas. These schemas include: emotional deprivation (questions 1 to 5), rejection (questions 6 to 10), mistrust and misbehavior (questions 11 to 15), social isolation (questions 16 to 20).), defect and shame (questions 21 to 25), failure (questions 26 to 30), incompetence and dependence (questions 31 to 35), disease vulnerability (questions 36 to

40), self-untransformed (questions 41 to 45), obedience (questions 46 to 50), self-sacrifice (questions 51 to 55), emotional inhibition (questions 56 to 60), strict standards (questions 61 to 65), entitlement (questions 66 to 70) and insufficient self-control (questions 71 to 75). Subjects report their agreement or disagreement with each question on a six-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

2. Neo Personality Characteristics Questionnaire (NEO-FFI). In the present study, the short form of the Neo Personality Characteristics Questionnaire, which has 60 questions, was used to measure people's personality traits. This questionnaire was introduced by Costa and McCree (1985) and measured five personality traits of people.

3. Meaning of Life Questionnaire (MLQ). In order to measure the meaning of life, the meaning of life questionnaire was used by Steger et al. (2006). This questionnaire includes 10 questions that measure the two dimensions of the presence of meaning (questions 1, 4, 5, 6 and 9) and the search for meaning (questions 2, 3, 7, 8 and 10). Subjects report their agreement or disagreement with each question on a seven-point Likert continuum from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree), and question 9 is scored inversely.

4. Suicidal Tendency Questionnaire. In order to measure suicidal tendencies, the suicidal tendency scale is from the Iranian form of Milon's adolescent clinical questionnaire (Mehrabi, 2018). This questionnaire contains 27 questions that evaluate the tendency to commit suicide. Subjects report their agreement or disagreement with each question on a three-point Likert scale as 0 (no), 1 (somewhat) and 2 (yes).

Results

Most relationships are significant at the P<0.01 or P<0.05 level. These correlation analyzes provide insight into bivariate relationships between research variables. The proposed model has a relatively good fit. After removing two non-significant paths and correlating the errors of one path, the final pattern reached the desired level with the recommendation of AMOS-26 software. Path coefficients indicate the significance of 10 direct paths and the non-significance of 1 direct path. The mediating relationships of the present study were also tested using the bootstrap method41. The confidence intervals for the routes indicate that zero is not located in these distances in connection with 5 indirect routes, and zero is located in these distances in connection with 1 indirect route; Therefore, out of six indirect paths, 5 paths became significant. The confidence level for this interval is 95 and the number of bootstrap resampling is 1000.

Conclusion

In the present study, the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and personality traits with suicidal tendency was investigated through the mediation of the meaning of life. In relation to early maladaptive schemas, the findings of the present study showed that early maladaptive schemas generally did not have a significant predictive power of adolescent suicide tendencies. This finding is inconsistent with the results of Kariminman et al.'s (1400), Abdi and Hanachi (2018), Borji et al. This means that the relationship of some early maladaptive schemas with suicidal tendency is significant, while the relationship of some other early maladaptive schemas with suicidal tendency is not significant. For example, the relationship between the schemas of rejection, emotional deprivation, mistrust, social isolation, defect and shame, incompetence and dependence, obedience, emotional inhibition, insufficient self-control and failure with suicidal tendencies has become significant.

Adolescents with schemas of rejection, emotional deprivation, mistrust, social isolation, deficiency and shame, incompetence and dependence, obedience, emotional inhibition, insufficient self-control and failure have a high tendency to commit suicide. Adolescents with undeveloped self-schemas, self-sacrifice, strict criteria and entitlement, do not necessarily tend to commit suicide, that is, almost half of them tend to commit suicide, but the other half do not tend to commit suicide. People with an untransformed self-schema are dissolved in the personalities of important people in their lives, such as father, mother, friend, etc., in such a way that they cannot have an independent identity for themselves. The self-sacrifice schema also usually creates behaviors in the individual that are known as altruism and sacrifice. People with this schema completely sacrifice themselves for others and give up many of their desires and needs for them; Therefore, not having the tendency to commit suicide can be a kind of sacrifice for their family and loved ones, which if they have the potential to commit suicide, they do not think about it and do not want it for the

sake of others. Also, people with a schema of strict criteria make themselves appear to be hardworking and perfectionist people. They have ambitious standards and constantly strive to achieve them, and people with the entitlement schema actually desire and strive for excellence, seeking power and obtaining a special and special position, and in this way, only to themselves and their desires. His relatives think; Therefore, people with schemas of strict standards and entitlements, due to having big goals and dreams and a spirit of effort, they have a high life expectancy and in times of failure, they can be harmed more than people who do not have these schemas. and even think of suicide because they do not allow themselves to make mistakes and fail (Pilkin-Goten et al., 2021).

The characteristic of neuroticism positively and the characteristics of extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness negatively predict the tendency to commit suicide among adolescents; Therefore, teenagers with neurotic personality traits have a high tendency to commit suicide, and teenagers with personality traits of extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness have a low tendency to commit suicide.

Overall, these findings show that the meaning of life mediates the relationship between personality traits and suicidal tendencies. The cohesion and flexibility of the family can predict academic vitality by mediating the meaning of life; Therefore, the results of this research can be used to develop programs related to the improvement and promotion of academic vitality, which in turn can reduce the tendency to commit suicide.

Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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